

Mother's Day lemon drizzle with poppy seed brittle

The star of this cake is the toasted poppy seed brittle that can be made up to a week in advance. The quantities given will make more brittle than you need here, but that makes for a double Mother's Day win. Just pop the excess in a sealed container, then wrap it in ribbon and attach a note saying: "This keeps well for a week – it's lovely crumbled over yoghurt or porridge, or blitzed to a paste for spreading on toast." *Cake and* present. Job done!

Prep 30 min

Cook 1 hr 10 min

Cool 1 hr+

Serves 8

For the cake batter

200g caster sugar

140g softened unsalted butter, cut into rough cubes

2 lemons, zest finely grated to get 2 tsp, and juiced, to get 2 tbsp

3 eggs

200g self-raising flour

¼ tsp baking powder

¼ tsp fine sea salt

For the lemon drizzle

120g caster sugar

3 lemons, 6-8 strips of zest pared off with a peeler, plus 1 tsp finely grated zest, and juiced, to get 120ml

For the poppy seed brittle

60g poppy seeds

50g caster sugar

50g liquid glucose

25g softened unsalted butter

⅛ tsp flaked sea salt

For the icing

200g mascarpone

100ml double cream

30g icing sugar

Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/390F/ gas 6, and line the base and sides of a 21cm round cake tin with greaseproof paper.

First, make the batter. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or using a handheld electric whisk), cream the caster sugar, butter and lemon zest on a medium-high speed for a minute or two, until pale and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one by one, fully incorporating each one until adding the next, then use a spatula to fold in the flour and baking powder, scraping down the sides of the bowl as you do so. Add the lemon juice and mix to combine.

Scrape the batter into the lined tin, smooth out the top and bake in the middle of the oven for 35 minutes, until the top is evenly golden brown and a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. Transfer the cake in its tin to a rack.

Meanwhile, make the drizzle. Put the sugar, lemon strips and 50ml cold water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Take off the heat and stir in the lemon juice.

Use a skewer to poke the warm cake all over and all the way from the top to the bottom, making as many holes as you can. Spoon over the warm drizzle, but saving two tablespoons of it and all the lemon strips for later. Leave the cake to cool completely in its tin for at least an hour.

Turn on the oven to 190C (170C fan)/375F/ gas 5. Put the poppy seeds on a baking tray, toast in the hot oven for 10 minutes, gently shaking the tray once halfway, then remove and set aside.

Cut out two pieces of greaseproof paper the same size as your baking tray. Put the sugar, glucose, butter and salt in a small

saucepan on a high heat, stir to combine, then bring to a boil. Take off the heat and stir in the toasted seeds. Put one sheet of the paper on a heatproof surface, pour the poppy seed mixture on top and cover with the second sheet of paper. Using a rolling pin, roll out the brittle under the second sheet until it's 2mm thick, then slide the paper and brittle on to the baking tray. Lift off the top layer of paper, bake for 20 minutes, then take out of the oven and leave to cool completely.

To make the icing, whisk the mascarpone, double cream and icing sugar in a large bowl for 30 seconds to a minute, until they form stiff peaks, then refrigerate until needed.

To assemble, lift the cake from its tin and peel off and discard the paper lining. Put the cake on a serving plate, spoon all the icing on top in the very centre, then use a palette knife to spread it out to cover the cake – keep the icing uneven and textured. Sprinkle over the remaining teaspoon of finely grated lemon zest. Smash a third of the brittle into small shards and scatter these on top (save the rest of the brittle for another use). Drizzle over the reserved syrup and lemon peel, so it pools in the little pockets on the icing, then slice and serve.